United Nations S/PV.4008

Security Council

Fifty-fourth Year

Provisional

4008th Meeting
Friday, 21 May 1999, 3.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Dange Réwaka	(Gabon)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Petrella
	Bahrain	Mr. Al-Dosari
	Brazil	Mr. Patriota
	Canada	Mr. Duval
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Malaysia	Mr. Rastam
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Slovenia	Mr. Türk
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Burleigh

Agenda

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Review and assessment of the implementation of the humanitarian programme established pursuant to Security Council resolution 986 (1995) (December 1996-November 1998) (S/1999/481)

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 1210 (1998) (S/1999/573)

Letter dated 19 May 1999 from the Acting Chairman of the Security Council Committee established by resolution 661 (1990) concerning the situation between Iraq and Kuwait (S/1999/582)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Review and assessment of the implementation of the humanitarian programme established pursuant to Security Council resolution 986 (1995) (December 1996-November 1998) (S/1999/481)

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Letter dated 19 May 1999 from the Acting Chairman of the Security Council Committee established by resolution 661 (1990) concerning the situation between Iraq and Kuwait (S/1999/582)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have the following documents before them: S/1999/481, review and assessment of the implementation of the humanitarian programme established pursuant to Security Council resolution 986 (1995) (December 1996-November 1998); S/1999/573, report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 1210 (1998); and S/1999/582, letter dated 19 May 1999 from the Acting Chairman of the Security Council Committee established by resolution 661 (1990) concerning the situation between Iraq and Kuwait addressed to the President of the Security Council.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/1999/588, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Argentina, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following documents: S/1999/500 and S/1999/549, letters dated 2 and 12 May 1999, respectively, from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General; S/1999/559, letter dated 13 May 1999 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council; and S/1999/572, letter dated 17 May 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation believes that the problem of the humanitarian crisis in Iraq cannot be resolved as long as the sanctions regime remains in force. Russia firmly supports the lifting of the sanctions in connection with the establishment of a new monitoring mechanism in Iraq, pursuant to the recommendations of Ambassador Amorim's panel. We are determined to continue to work towards that end.

With regard to the humanitarian programme, the steps being taken within its framework are barely sufficient to ensure the physical survival of the population. The delivery of spare parts for the rehabilitation of Iraq's oil infrastructure is proceeding very slowly. The problem of moving funds from the 13 per cent to the 53 per cent Iraqi account has not been resolved within the context of the joint procurement calculation, and there is also an urgent need to review the percentage of funds being moved to the compensation fund.

We are aware of all of the flaws of the United Nations humanitarian operation. However, we are agreeing to extend it only because, in these circumstances, it offers some hope of easing, to some extent, the sufferings of the Iraqi people.

Against the backdrop of the humanitarian crisis, we condemn in particular the continuing aerial bombing of Iraq civilian and military facilities by the United States and the United Kingdom under the illegal pretext of the no-fly zones, which were created unilaterally, in circumvention of the Security Council. As a result of this illegal use of force, innocent people are dying. The

civilian population is suffering, and the oil and industrial infrastructure of Iraq has been damaged.

We are particularly concerned at reports of strikes against facilities used in the United Nations humanitarian operation. On 11 May, a number of civilian facilities in the Basra province were struck. These included three transshipment warehouses from which food is distributed to Iraq pursuant to the memorandum of understanding.

We pay tribute to the staff of the United Nations humanitarian programme in Iraq, who are carrying out important and noble work under difficult conditions.

Out of purely humanitarian considerations, and in a desire to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of at least a minimum of essential goods to Iraq, the Russian delegation does not object to the adoption of the technical draft before us extending resolution 986 (1995).

However, we must stress once again that it is only the lifting of sanctions, and not these palliative measures — the traditional extensions of resolution 986 (1995) — that will truly help us to overcome the humanitarian and socio-economic crisis in Iraq. That is precisely the conclusion reached by the panels of Ambassador Amorim and also the conclusion reached by the humanitarian organizations working in Iraq. The job of halting sanctions is an acute matter for the Security Council, and we will persist in seeking to resolve it in the context of the deployment in Iraq of a new monitoring disarmament mechanism.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): This draft resolution in front of us reflects the Council's desire to continue the humanitarian programme, and the United Kingdom welcomes that. Discussions amongst members of the Council continue on the Council's broader approach to Iraq. We hope that these discussions will soon reach a comprehensive conclusion compatible with the Council's present resolutions, and we will work hard to that end.

In addition to rolling over the programme for a further 180 days, this draft resolution indicates the Council's intention to keep the programme under review, including, if necessary, by adjusting the ceiling for Iraq's oil exports to fund the humanitarian programme. The discussions on the recommendations of the panel on the humanitarian side and this draft resolution together underline the Council's firm and united support for the humanitarian programme and its determination to improve the situation of the Iraqi people. We call on the Government of Iraq themselves to cooperate constructively in the implementation of this programme to ensure that the full potential of the programme to meet the needs of the Iraqi people is realized. That will make a greater immediate difference within the framework of the Council's decisions on this issue than any other single measure.

Mention has been made of the activity in the no-fly zones. There is a simple way to reduce tension. Iraq should cease targeting coalition aircraft. The United Kingdom's operations are purely reactive. We do not initiate aggressive action and if we react we target relevant military facilities only. The no-fly zones are necessary in order to limit Iraq's capacity to oppress its own people and in order to monitor its compliance with its obligations under Security Council resolution 688 (1991).

Mr. Burleigh (United States): The United States has a deep and enduring interest in the welfare of Iraqi citizens living under the regime of Saddam Hussein. We took a leading role in shaping the oil-for-food programme from its inception and note with satisfaction the demonstrable success of this important humanitarian effort. Accordingly, we are pleased to join consensus on today's draft resolution extending the oil-for-food programme in Iraq for a further six-month period. The programme is the largest humanitarian assistance effort in United Nations history, and it has brought about a significant improvement in living conditions for Iraqi civilians.

While the primary responsibility for meeting civilian needs continues to reside with the Government of Iraq, it is entirely appropriate that the United Nations act to ensure that the benefits of Iraq's oil revenues be directed to civilian needs. We note that the rise in world oil prices has increased the level of available funding in recent months, and we express again our willingness to see the programme expand in response to humanitarian needs.

We commend the leadership of the office of the Iraq programme in managing the oil-for-food programme and call upon the Government of Iraq to cooperate fully with the programme during the coming phase.

With regard to the no-fly zones, I associate the United States completely with what Ambassador Greenstock has just said with regard to the rationale for the military action that is taken from time to time by the United States Government.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China)(*spoke in Chinese*): The oil-for-food programme, established by Security Council resolution 986 (1995), has undergone five phases, which to some extent have eased the humanitarian difficulties of Iraqi civilians. We would like to express our positive assessment of the work done by the oil-for-food implementation programme, the 661 Security Council Committee members and the Secretariat.

It should be pointed out that from its inception the oil-for-food programme had its limitations. Phase V of the programme, in fact, has not resulted in significant improvements in the humanitarian situation in Iraq. As the Secretary-General stated, the programme cannot meet all the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people, nor can it restore Iraq's economic and social infrastructure to pre-1990 levels. The evaluation panel on the humanitarian situation on Iraq also came up with similar conclusions in its report. China would like to reiterate that only with the necessary political will on the part of the parties concerned and only with the lifting of economic sanctions against Iraq can there be any fundamental easing of the humanitarian situation and difficulties in Iraq.

Regrettably, however, the United States and the United Kingdom are still bombing civilian targets in the so-called no-fly zone. This act has aggravated the humanitarian crisis in Iraq. We are strongly opposed to that act committed by the United States and the United Kingdom. We demand that the United States and the United Kingdom immediately halt their bombing missions in the so-called no-fly zone.

In extending the oil-for-food programme, we believe the programme must be expanded and revised. Regrettably, however, it is difficult for the Council to reach consensus on this. Based on the considerations of maintaining basic humanitarian supplies to meet the needs of the Iraqi people and civilians, China accepts the present technical roll-over of the programme and will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us.

We fully agree with the proposal of the Secretary-General to depoliticize the humanitarian programme. We hope that the parties concerned will reach consensus on lifting the ceiling on Iraqi oil exports as soon as possible. We also hope that the 661 Committee will resolve the technical and procedural matters that are hampering implementation of the humanitarian programme, such as reimbursement, putting applications on hold, and so forth.

Mr. Doutriaux (France) (*spoke in French*): Today, in renewing the oil-for-food programme for a sixth phase, the Council is thinking of the very grave humanitarian crisis affecting Iraq. Under the leadership of Mr. Amorim, the humanitarian panel confirmed that the disturbing figures given by United Nations agencies regarding the nutritional, health and social situation of Iraq were reliable and accurate. The Council will no longer be able to say that it did not know. The Council, like Iraq, must assume its responsibilities.

At the beginning of April the panel formulated ambitious recommendations to improve the functioning of resolution 986 (1995) and to assist the Iraqi population. We would have hoped that all these proposals would have come into force as of the beginning of this new phase. We shall continue our endeavours to that end.

We are pleased to note that a positive gain seems to have been achieved. We understand from the consultations in the Council and from the addition of paragraph 14 to the draft resolution that the Council will be flexible and open on the question of the oil ceiling. If Iraq should exceed the ceiling during the sixth phase, we understand that the Council does not intend to ask Baghdad to suspend its sales. The flow of goods will not be interrupted.

In approving this sixth phase, we should also bear in mind the very clear conclusion of the report of the humanitarian panel (S/1999/356, annex II), which in paragraph 58 states,

> "the panel reiterates its understanding that the humanitarian situation in Iraq will continue to be a dire one in the absence of a sustained revival of the Iraqi economy, which in turn cannot be achieved solely through remedial humanitarian efforts."

Resolution 986 (1995), even in an improved form, will therefore not be able to provide anything but a partial and temporary response to the problem.

France hopes that the Council will quickly reach an agreement, pursuant to the recommendations of the three panels, that would make it possible to restore the unity of the Council, resolve the humanitarian crisis, ensure the resumption of normal relations between the United Nations and Iraq and ensure regional security. I wish to recall that last January we made proposals to that effect.

The President (*spoke in French*) I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/1999/588.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Bahrain, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Gabon, Gambia, Malaysia, Namibia, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Slovenia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1242 (1999).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.